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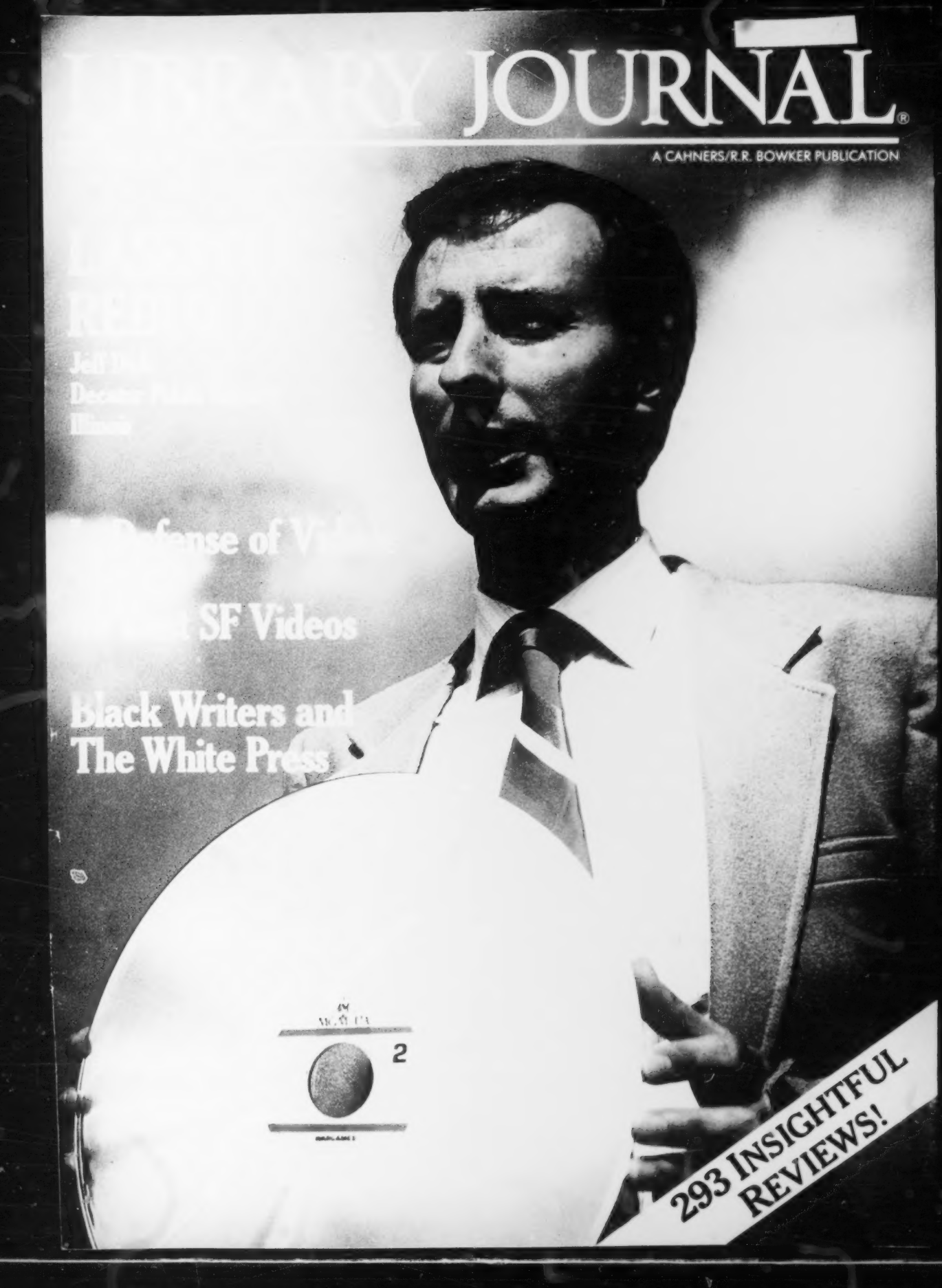

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VOL. 115 No. 20

LIBRARY

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The Decatur Public Library in Illinois has a collection of 20 laserdiscs. Decatur's Jeff Dick tells where the format is heading and how to meet it in "Laserdisc Redux" on page 36.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY SIGMAN/BLACK STAR

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LIBRARY MARKET OUTLOOK

BY DEBORAH SELSKY

The Nation's Reading Report Card

For those who worry that the nation's future adults may not be readers, there is some good news. According to the Reading Report Card for 1971–1988, a study by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the level of reading proficiency among nine-, 13-, and 17-year-old students has remained steady in the past decade. The percentage of students who read for fun also remains strong. Only one-tenth of students in all age groups claim they never read for fun. About ten percent to 18 percent of the students in these age groups never or rarely engage in reading-related activities (including spending their own money on books, borrowing books from the library, or recommending a good book to a friend).

The one dramatic change in reading proficiency across all age groups has been among black and Hispanic students. Based on a scale of 0 to 500, average proficiency levels increased from 242.5 in 1980 to 274.4 in 1988 for black 17-year-olds and from 260.7 to 270.8 for Hispanic 17-year-olds. (It should be noted, however, that Hispanic students were tested in English only.) While this represents substantial gains, there is still a great deal of disparity between reading proficiency of these minority groups and white 17-year-olds, who averaged 294.7 in 1988.

Reading more means reading better

The relationship between reading and reading proficiency remains strong. The average proficiency level of 17-year-old students who read daily (301.8) is higher than those who read only yearly or monthly (273.2).

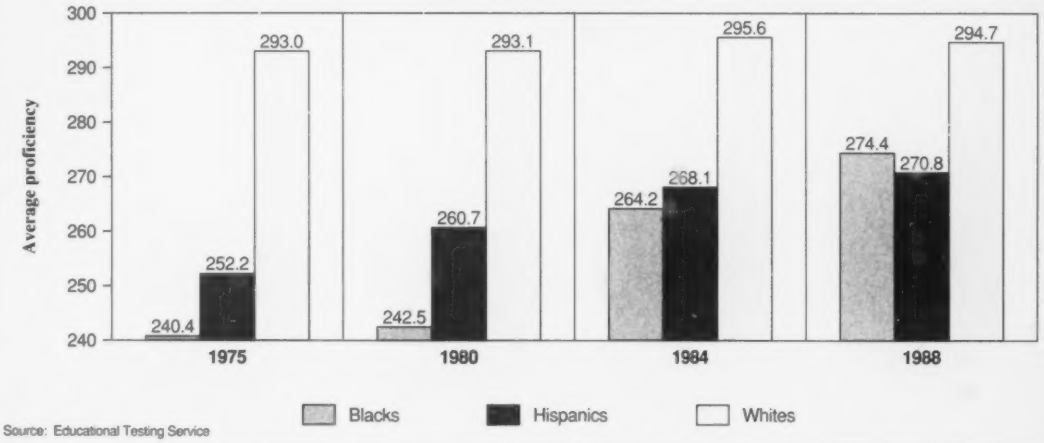
Students who regularly read books, magazines, and newspapers often display the highest reading proficiency. Correspondingly, students with the highest reading proficiency are the most active readers. While impossible to determine the cause and effect between reading and reading proficiency, it is important to recognize and, thus, promote this relationship. In order to further improve reading proficiency levels, it is essential for parents, teachers, and librarians to continue to encourage healthy reading habits from an early age.

Home court advantages

The level of a young student's reading proficiency varies significantly by sex, race/ethnicity, level of parental education, number of reading materials in the home, and hours of TV watched per day. The one common denominator among these relationships is the amount a student is exposed to reading and reading materials in the home and in school. The highest reading proficiency levels are among students who are white, whose parents have some college education, who are exposed to at least four types of reading materials at home, and who watch less than two hours of TV per day.

Amount of reading and, therefore, level of proficiency attained are greatly affected by the exposure to reading materials in the home and the amount of reading done by other members of the household. Specifically, average proficiency increases across all age groups as the number of types of reading materials in the home increases. Also, average proficiency levels are highest among students who say the people they live with read daily, as opposed to less frequently.

Average Reading Proficiency of 17-Year-Olds
(by race/ethnicity)



Source: Educational Testing Service

Deborah Selsky is an economist with Cahners Economics, which provides industry analyses and forecasting services for the markets its magazines serve

CALENDAR

Canada Online IV, Federal Pre-White House Conference on Library and Information Services, Amigos Bibliographic Council, Inc. Workshop

NOVEMBER

19—The New York Metropolitan Area Chapter of the Association of Jewish Libraries Cataloging Workshop, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York. Theme: "Hebrew/English Cataloging in an On-line Environment." Guest speakers: Naomi Steinberger, Jewish Theological Seminary; Aviva Astrinsky and Ruth Ronen, Annenberg Research Institute; Dr. Bella Hass Weinberg, YIVO. Contact: Rita Lifton; 212-678-8092; FAX 212-678-8998.

26-28—Canada Online IV, Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Theme: "Towards 2000: Challenges and Opportunities." Guest speaker: Reva Basch. Fee: $575. Contact: Conference Coordinator, Canada Online Limited, 38 Fulton Ave., Toronto, Ontario M4K 1X5; 416-467-0388; FAX 416-423-1487.

26-27—Federal Pre-White House Conference on Library and Information Services, National Library of Medicine, Lister Hill Auditorium, Bethesda, Md. Planned by the Federal Library/Information Center Advisory Group (FLAG), under the auspices of the Federal Library and Information Center Committee. Participants will develop recommendations for the upcoming national conference on three core issues: access policies, networking, and preservation, promoting the federal sector umbrella resolution of "citizen access to federal information resources through federal agency information organizations." Guest speakers: Dr. Fred B. Wood, senior associate, Office of Technology Assessment/Access; Dr. Allen Fusonie, head of special collections, National Agricultural Library/Preservation; Dr. Neal K. Kaske, senior associate, U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Library Programs/Networking. Contact: FLICC, Library of Congress, Adams Bldg., Washington, DC 20540; 202-707-6055.

29-30—AMIGOS Bibliographic Council, Inc. Workshop, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, Dallas. Theme: "The Reality of Collection Evaluation: Facts, Myths and Practices." Guest speakers: George Soete, associate university librarian for collections, University of California, San Diego; Bonnie MacEwan, fine arts librarian, University of Missouri–Columbia; and Mary Bushing, collection development officer, Montana State University. Fee: $155, members; $230, nonmembers; hotel and meals not included. Contact: Geri Hutchins, Library Liaison Officer, AMIGOS, 11300 N. Central Expwy., Suite 321, Dallas, TX 75243; 214-750-6130; 800-843-8482.

30—New Jersey Library Association, Audiovisual Section, Monmouth County Library HQ. Theme: "Film and Video Basics." Contact: Quentin Van Buren, Monmouth County Library, 125 Symmes Dr., Manalapan, NJ 07726; 201-290-1900.

DECEMBER

4-8—Southeastern Library Association/Tennessee Library Association Joint Conference, Opryland Hotel, Nashville. Theme: "Southeastern Harmony: Libraries in Tune for the Future." Contact: James E. Ward, Box 4146, David Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN 37204-3951; 615-269-1000, x2283.

1991

JANUARY

10-12—HBW Associates' Library Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment Workshop, Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, Chicago. A workshop that provides start-to-finish information on preparing to furnish and equip various new or remodeled library facilities. Fee: $195. Contact: HBW Associates, Inc., PO Box 191487, Dallas, TX 75219-1487; 214-559-4291; FAX 214-559-3389.

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

American Assn. of Law Libraries: New Orleans, Jul. 21–24, 1991.

American LA: Atlanta, Jun. 29–Jul. 4, 1991; **Midwinter:** Chicago, Jan. 12–17, 1991.

Assn. of College and Research Libraries: Phoenix, Apr. 1–4, 1992.

Canadian LA: Montreal, Jun. 2–5, 1991.

Guadalajara Intl. Book Fair: Guadalajara, Mexico, Nov. 24–Dec. 2.

Library and Information Technology Assn.: Denver, Sept. 13–17, 1992.

Medical LA: San Francisco, May 31–Jun. 6, 1991.

Music LA: Indianapolis, Feb. 13–16, 1991.

Natl. Library Week: Apr. 14–20, 1991.

Pan Pacific Library Conference: Honolulu, Jan. 9–11, 1991.

Public LA: San Diego, Mar. 20–23, 1991.

Special LA: San Antonio, Tex., Jun. 8–13, 1991.

White House Conference on Library and Info Svcs.: Washington, D.C., Jul. 9–13, 1991.

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